

Tophill Low Nature Reserve Education Centre

This leaflet contains information to help you prepare for your visit to Yorkshire Water.

Education Centre Advisers

Our Education Centre visits are run by dedicated colleagues who either have a water industry or educational background. Our Education Advisers are well-prepared to adapt language and activities to suit all our visitors – whether it be primary, secondary, university students or special interest groups. Each member of the team has received an enhanced certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service. All primary school visits will be led by one of our Education Advisers.

Education Centre Visits

Our visits are suitable for all ages from 6 years (Year 2) upwards. Visitors with special needs are welcomed at Tophill Low Nature Reserve and we can accommodate wheelchair access across the majority of the site.

The school should provide sufficient adults to meet our minimum required ratio:

1:6 for Years 1 to 3

1:10 for Years 4 to 6

1:15 for Year 7 and above

Our Education facility is opened for pre-planned visits only. Visit co-ordinators wishing to undertake a pre-visit check/risk assessment should contact our Education Team to make suitable arrangements. Classes visiting for the full day will be able to use our classroom for lunch. Public toilets are available on site and include hand washing facilities. The toilets include 1 male cubicle, 2 female cubicles, 2 adult sized urinals and 1 separate accessible toilet.

Safety on Site

- Please note that the Education Centre is located on a nature reserve which is open to the general public.
- Some areas may have vehicle movements including the car park and entrance / access road.
- The classroom is a designated area for pre-booked visits only and due to fire regulations, has an occupancy limit of 45. As a result, we would only take one group booking per session.
- Safety precautions are an essential part of your visit. We have prepared a Risk Assessment for your information and can confirm that our Health and Safety Team have authorised the route/activities undertaken by visitors.
- Students and adults are advised to wear suitable footwear and clothing for an outdoor visit (flat shoes and warm, outdoor clothing/waterproofs). Hi-Vis waistcoats will be made available so we can identify primary students as they undertake activities around the reserve. Long trousers and long sleeves are recommended due to the presence of nettles near paths.
- Visiting groups are asked to bring a qualified First Aider. A basic first aid kit is located at the Education Centre.
- Risk is very limited. Visitors are chaperoned at all times by our Education Centre Adviser. Barriers and mesh separate visitors from any areas of high hazard. A safety talk is given at the start of every session and is compulsory. Please ensure that any warning notices and safety signs are observed.
- Due to the outdoor nature of your visit, please be aware of the weather conditions – hot and sunny weather or sudden showers may occur.

- Finally, you should be aware that contractors, Yorkshire Water employees and reserve volunteers, may be on site undertaking maintenance / building work.

Our education centres are located on or near operational treatment works, which are no-smoking/no vaping locations. Any tours where individuals are found to be smoking or vaping on site will be cancelled with immediate effect.

Pre-Visit Work for Educational Visits

Included with your confirmation email are links to forms on our education portal – please complete these at least 10 working days before your planned visit.

The work covered in your visit has been structured to address the following key requirements of the National Curriculum Scheme of Work. A basic understanding of the water cycle is useful prior to your visit taking place.

GEOGRAPHY Rivers
Water Cycle

SCIENCE State of Matter
Properties & Changes in Materials
Life cycles
Adaptations to the environment
Identification of local fauna

We have designed the centre and visit to provide many opportunities for stimulating extension work across the curriculum, including Literacy and Numeracy.

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR:		LOCATION:	ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN
Education Centre Site Visit		Tophill Low Nature Reserve	April 2026
HAZARDS	THOSE AT RISK	EXISTING CONTROLS	FURTHER ACTION & ACCOUNTABILITY
1. General Site Activity	Visitors	Visitors will be accompanied by trained & experienced Education Adviser. Each Adviser has an enhanced DBS check and has undertaken first aid and fire marshal training.	Education Advisers will teach the session. School staff are asked to monitor behaviour and always accompany students during the session.
2. Site Access/ Supervision	Visitors	Tour co-ordinators are advised to bring the following adult/student ratio: 1:6 for Years 1 to 3 1:10 for Years 4 to 6 1:15 for Year 7 and above The Education Adviser will provide a safety talk at the start of each visit – this is compulsory.	Action: Group leaders to adhere to minimum adult: student ratio and ensure all members of the group attend the safety talk. A minimum of 2 adults is required for all secondary school & college visits.
3. Visitors leaving the main tour groups during the session	Visitors	Students and adults must stay with their tour groups during the Education visits.	Action: Group leaders to ensure the adequate supervision of students and adults.
4. Slips/Trips and Falls (Slippery/Uneven Floors)	Visitors	A pre-determined route is walked prior to every visit by the Education Adviser to identify any possible hazards. Hazard markings are placed if they are required. Visitors to be mindful of tree roots, branches, wet leaves etc., when moving around the site. A First Aid Kit is available in the Education Centre.	Action: Tour groups should include a designated First Aider. Group leaders to ensure all visitors adhere to designated routes/paths.
5. Slips/Trips and Falls (Falls From Height)	Visitors	Barriers and mesh are installed where appropriate around the nature reserve. Some areas of the tour route may involve walking on metal grids and stairs.	Action: Group leaders to inform their party that some walk areas involve metal grids and heights.
6. Slips/Trips and Falls	Visitors	Students and adults are required to wear suitable footwear and bring appropriate outdoor clothing. Long trousers are strongly recommended due to nettles which may be on site. Hi-visibility waistcoats will be made available for primary students and are compulsory.	Action: Group leaders to ensure all visitors wear appropriate footwear and clothing and hi-visibility waistcoats.
7. Vehicles and Vehicle Movement	Visitors	On arrival please adhere to site speed limits and wait to be met by the Education Adviser at the specified car park.	Action: Group leaders to remind their party about road safety and supervise students whilst crossing any roads.
8. Flora & Fauna	Visitors	Your visit is taking place within a natural habitat. Some types of vegetation may be poisonous and have the ability to sting & scratch. Some insects and reptiles sting, bite and have venom. Trees and woody vegetation will have natural defects and deadwood. A safety talk will be provided on arrival and all visitors should respect the environment they are entering. Students to wash their hands after handling flora, fauna and any woodland creatures.	Action: Group leaders to ensure all visitors are aware of risks within a natural habitat and identify any individuals who may need specific antidotes for existing conditions. All students to wash their hands after activities completed.
9. Pond dipping	Visitors	There is the potential for transmission of diseases such as Weils Disease (Leptospirosis) when pond dipping. All visitors to attend safety talk and ensure good hygiene and hand washing practices following activities. http://www.rospea.com/leisure-safety/water/advice/weils-disease/	Action: Group leaders to be aware of the information on Weils Disease.

10. Insect borne disease	Visitors	<p>There is the potential for transmission of diseases such as Ticks Lymes Disease in forest and woodland areas.</p> <p>To prevent any risk of infection, visitors should be encouraged to wear long trousers and long sleeves. Light coloured clothing will make the ticks more visible.</p> <p>More information can be found here: https://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/</p>	<p>Action: Group leaders to be aware of the information on Ticks Lymes Disease.</p>
11. Food Hygiene & Lunchtime Supervision	Visitors	<p>Lunch facilities for full day visits will be provided and the tour party are asked to eat in the designated area.</p> <p>Tour co-ordinators are responsible for supervising their group during this time period.</p>	<p>Action: Group leaders to be responsible for supervision of their party at lunchtime.</p>
12. Fire/Explosion	Visitors	<p>Education Advisers are briefed on the fire evacuation procedures.</p> <p>A Fire Risk Assessment is in place incorporating actions when visitors are on site.</p> <p>Escape Routes and signage are in place around the site.</p>	<p>Action: Group leaders to note emergency exits on arrival & follow instructions in the event of an emergency.</p>
13. Electricity	Visitors	<p>Electrical items are PAT tested.</p> <p>Education Advisers and Teachers are to supervise students during practical educational activities.</p>	<p>Action: Only PAT tested items to be used within the education centre.</p>
14. Drowning or engulfment	Visitors	<p>The designated tour route includes a pond dipping area. There is a designated dipping point with a permanently mounted throw line as a rescue aid. No pond dipping to take place at other locations of the reserve.</p>	<p>Action: Group leaders must ensure adequate supervision of student/adults at all times.</p>
15. Smoking & vaping	Visitors	<p>This site is a 'no-smoking' and no 'vaping' location. Any tours where individuals are found to be smoking or vaping on site will be cancelled with immediate effect.</p>	<p>Action: Group leaders to note that visits may be cancelled with immediate effect if individuals are found smoking/vaping on site.</p>